

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1                    1.        A tool for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed within  
2 a sheath, the tool comprising:  
3                    a proximal portion having a first flange connected with a shaft extending from  
4 the flange and adapted for engagement with a powered mechanical rotation device; and  
5                    a distal portion having a second flange; and  
6                    a column coupled with one of the proximal and distal portions and detachably  
7 engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions, the column including a cavity  
8 adapted to grip the filament and disposed such that the cavity is between the first and second  
9 flanges when the column is engaged with the other of the proximal and distal portions.

1                    2.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the column is fixedly coupled with  
2 the one of the proximal and distal portions.

1                    3.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:  
2                    the column comprises a hollow interior; and  
3                    the cavity comprises a hole extending through a surface of the column to the  
4 hollow interior.

1                    4.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein cavity comprises a plurality of  
2 cavities, each such cavity being adapted to grip the filament.

1                    5.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the powered mechanical rotation  
2 device is a hand-held drill.

1                    6.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:  
2                    the first flange comprises a threaded hole; and  
3                    the column is threaded at a proximal end for threading into the threaded hole,  
4 whereby the column is detachably engaged with the proximal portion and  
5 coupled with the distal portion.

1                    7.        The tool recited in claim 1 wherein:  
2                    the second flange comprises a threaded hole; and  
3                    the column is threaded at a distal end for threading into the threaded hole,

4                   whereby the column is detachably engaged with the distal portion and coupled  
5   with the proximal portion.

1                   8.       The tool recited in claim 1 wherein the filament comprises a strength  
2   member of an optical-fiber cable.

1                   9.       A method for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed  
2   within a sheath, the method comprising:  
3                   attaching an end of the filament to a tool having a column disposed between  
4   two flanges, the column including a cavity adapted to grip the filament;  
5                   thereafter, rotating the column to pull the filament from the sheath and to  
6   spool the filament about the column; and  
7                   thereafter, separating one of the flanges from the column to release the  
8   spooled filament.

1                   10.      The method recited in claim 9 wherein rotating the column comprises  
2   rotating the column with a powered mechanical rotation device engaged with the tool.

1                   11.      The method recited in claim 10 wherein the powered mechanical  
2   rotation device is a hand-held drill.

1                   12.      The method recited in claim 9 wherein:  
2                   the tool further has a shaft extending from a first of the flanges; and  
3                   rotating the column comprises rotating the shaft with a powered mechanical  
4   rotating device engaged with the shaft.

1                   13.      The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges  
2   from the column comprises separating the first of the flanges from the column.

1                   14.      The method recited in claim 12 wherein separating one of the flanges  
2   from the column comprises separating a second of the flanges from the column.

1                   15.      The method recited in claim 9 wherein:  
2                   the one of the flanges comprises a threaded hole into which a threaded end of  
3   the column is screwed; and  
4                   separating the one of the flanges from the column comprises unscrewing the  
5   column relative to the one of the flanges.

1                    16.    The method recited in claim 9 wherein the filament comprises a  
2 strength member of an optical-fiber cable.

1                    17.    A system for opening a cable having a length of filament disposed  
2 within a sheath, the system comprising:  
3                    means for gripping an end of the filament;  
4                    means for extracting the filament from within the sheath and for spooling the  
5 extracted filament;  
6                    means for confining the filament to a longitudinal region as the filament is  
7 spooled; and  
8                    means for removing the means for confining to release the spooled filament  
9 from the longitudinal region.

1                    18.    The system recited in claim 17 wherein the means for gripping the end  
2 of the filament comprises a cavity in a column about which the filament is spooled.

1                    19.    The system recited in claim 18 wherein the means for extracting the  
2 filament from within the sheath and for spooling the extracted filament comprises means for  
3 rotating the column about an axis of the column.

1                    20.    The system recited in claim 19 wherein the means for confining the  
2 filament comprises first and second flanges disposed at positions along the axis, wherein the  
3 cavity is disposed between the first and second flanges and wherein at least one of the first  
4 and second flanges is removable from the column.